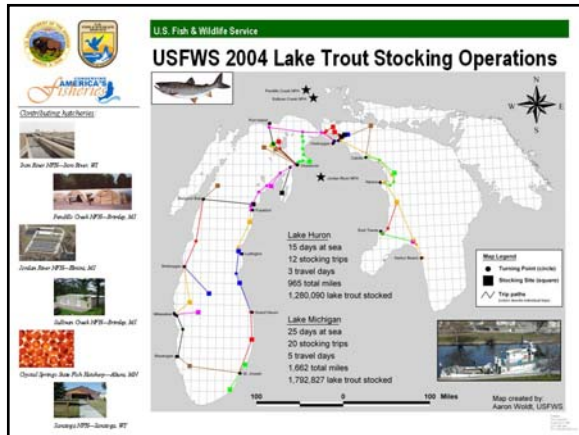




Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

Service Maps 2004 Stocking Trips of M/V Togue

At the request of Assistant Regional Director Gerry Jackson and Jordan River NFH manager Rick Westerhof, fishery biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena FRO created a GIS based map of stocking trips made by the M/V Togue in 2004. The M/V Togue, based in Cheboygan, MI, is the Service's offshore stocking vessel used to plant yearling lake trout in US waters of lakes Huron and Michigan in support of interagency lake trout rehabilitation programs.



This map of 2004 M/V Togue stocking trips will allow the Service to educate public and employees regarding the critical role the Service plays in lake trout rehabilitation efforts. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of implementing educational and outreach activities to educate public regarding Service activities under the "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Aaron Woldt

Partnerships and Accountability



Sturgeon Tagging Database in Progress

During the month of February, Fishery Biologist Adam Kowalski led two conference calls with Service personnel to finalize the structure for a Great Lakes wide lake sturgeon tagging database. In 2004 Kowalski received a grant for \$11,000 from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust to construct and maintain a database to house tag information such as tag type, tag number, tag location, and tagger contact information. Lake sturgeon are tagged by several resource agencies and universities in research studies and evaluations

throughout the Great Lakes. Once finalized and posted on the internet, users will be able to access the database and query out contact information for pit tag and external tag numbers for any tagged lake sturgeon.

To date all existing USFWS data have been entered into the database. We are building a test web site for all other agency and university partners to view before sending out data submission requests. This test web site is scheduled to be working by the end of March 2005.

This database will improve the information sharing process between agencies and the general public who may encounter tagged lake sturgeon. The multi-partner nature of this work is consistent with the Service's goal of establishing and maintaining open, interactive communication with its partner agencies under the "Partnerships and Accountability" priority of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Adam Kowalski



Review of Lake Huron Double Crested Cormorant Management

Alpena FRO Project Leader McClain participated in a meeting hosted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) - Alpena Fisheries Research Station on February 24 to review double crested cormorant management activities that took place in the Les Cheneaux Islands region of northern Lake Huron in 2004. Consistent with terms of the Service's Public Depredation Order,

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services (WS) and MDNR has initiated a program to control cormorant populations near Cedarville, MI where increasing populations have been linked to declines in yellow perch populations. Pete Butchko (WS State Director) summarized the results of control efforts directed in 2004 and discussed possible next steps for areas of concern in Lake Huron.

The Thunder Bay region of Lake Huron was discussed as a site for future cormorant management efforts due to MDNR concerns with possible predation effects on stocked salmonids, lake whitefish and smallmouth bass, as well as habitat concerns for some of the islands in the Thunder Bay area. In addition to McClain, the Service was represented by Steve Kahl, Ed DeVries, and Jim Dastyk from the Shiawassee NWR to provide input on issues related to the islands part of the Michigan Islands NWR in Thunder Bay. Discussion will continue between the agencies as further plans are developed.

Collaboration between federal, state and tribal agencies is essential for effective management of Great Lakes natural resources. Meetings to discuss concerns and evaluate management strategies are critical to maintain partnerships. This effort is consistent with the "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" priorities of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Jerry McClain

Cooperation with Native Americans



Experimental Gill Net Repairs

In February, Fishery Biologists Scott Koproski and Adam Kowalski began repairing experimental assessment gill nets that were used during the 2004 fishery independent lake whitefish survey in 1836 Treaty waters. The experimental gill nets do not have lead weights secured to the net frame like standard bottom-set, gill nets. The experimental nets have a three foot dropper line from the bottom of the net frame tied to a continuous piece of lead core line. The dropper lines are tied every 18" between the

frame and the lead core line. This results in a "mesh free" area at the bottom 3 feet of the water column which helps reduce lake trout bycatch, since trout typically associate themselves with the lake bottom.

During the 2004 fishery independent lake whitefish surveys, both the standard and experimental assessment nets were fished simultaneously. Preliminary results indicate that lake whitefish CPE's increased slightly using the experimental assessment nets, and lake trout CPE's dropped significantly. Another gang of experimental assessment nets will be built prior to the 2005 fishery independent lake whitefish survey and fished to further compare catch rates in each net type.

The maintenance of gill nets and other equipment is work that is performed annually to ensure assessment activities are completed. This work is an example of Alpena FRO's commitment to the following Fisheries Vision Priorities: Partnerships and Accountability, Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, and Cooperation with Native Americans.

Scott Koproski

Public Use



WinterFest

Biologists Wells and Koproski participated in the Sprinkler Lake Education Center's annual WinterFest on February 12. The event was a day long winter fun festival at the Sprinkler Lake Education Center in Harrisville Michigan. There were interactive science displays, dog sled rides, crafts, and a petting zoo. The Alpena FRO provided a booth at the event with educational material and interactive fish puzzles. Approximately 700 children and adults visited the booth. The festival allowed the Alpena FRO the opportunity to fulfill one of the station goals of distributing information to the general public about fish and wildlife resources, natural ecosystems and programs of the Service.

This accomplishment was an educational and outreach opportunity. We were able to showcase the Service to the public and educate people on the aquatic resources available in the Great Lakes. Approximately 700 people visited the Alpena FRO fisheries booth and display providing an outlet to educate and interact with children on issues regarding Great Lakes aquatic resources. This event addressed the Fisheries Vision priority for "Public Use".

Susan Wells



Job Shadowing Allows Students an Opportunity to Learn About Careers in Fisheries

Two students from ACES Academy in Alpena, Michigan met with staff from the Alpena FRO on February 16 to job shadow careers in fisheries. Biologist Anjanette Bowen provided an overview of Service programs, job opportunities, and offices located in Michigan. Bowen also provided information on station activities to determine the movements and habitat preferences of native lake sturgeon in the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers, and activities to monitor and control aquatic invasive species in Lake Huron and the St. Marys River.

Fish and Wildlife Biologist Heather Enterline provided information on station activities related to habitat and ecosystem health, including efforts to improve fish passage and decrease siltation of streams at road stream crossings by culvert replacement and improving fish and wildlife habitat in aquatic areas by placing logs to improve fish structure or planting wild rice used by migratory birds.

Biologists Scott Koproski and Adam Kowalski introduced the students to laboratory techniques commonly used by the station including fish ageing techniques, coded-wire tag (CWT) recovery, and net building. Fish ageing was demonstrated with two

different structures (scales and otoliths) and structures were enhanced for ageing using Protech computer software. The removal and reading of CWTs was demonstrated. CWTs approximate the size of a pencil lead. They are used to mark study groups of hatchery reared lake trout to determine their movements following release. CWT recovery is very important to the lake trout restoration program in Lake Huron. Koproski and Kowalski also provided a demonstration of gill net construction and repair. Gillnets are a main staple sampling gear for lake trout, aquatic invasive species, and treaty fishery studies of lake whitefish.

Students toured the facility, viewed survey vessels, and took in the hands-on experience. Both expressed an interest in returning to volunteer during the field season. Education and outreach are important components of the Service's mission and the Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future for "Public Use" and "Partnerships and Accountability".

Anjanette Bowen



Service Biologist Speaks at ACC Career Pathway Night

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena FRO was invited to speak at the Natural Resources and Agriscience and Arts and Communication Career Pathway Night sponsored by Alpena Community College (ACC) and the Alpena/Montmorency/Alcona Educational Service District on February 24, 2005. Woldt gave a ½ hour long PowerPoint

presentation to three groups of high school and college students, parents, and community members describing the field of marine biology, his professional duties as a Service Fishery Biologist, and Service career options. Concurrent sessions included presentations by a State of Michigan conservation officer, forest fire officer, forester, geologist, horticulturist, meteorologist, surveyor, veterinarian, actor, author, model, broadcast journalist, and newspaper reporter.

Woldt's presentation highlighted the educational requirements for professional marine biologists, necessary and recommended coursework, universities that offer marine science/fisheries training programs, employment opportunities inside and outside the Service, expected salaries, potential duties of a Service Fishery Biologist, career paths within the Service, and Region 3 Fisheries programs. Students and parents asked questions about the field of marine biology and inquired about job shadowing opportunities.

Overall, Career Pathway Night allows students and parents to learn about potential natural resource based careers from local professionals representing a wide range of agencies. The Natural Resources and Agriscience and Arts and Communication night was 1 of 5 Career Pathways nights sponsored by ACC in 2005 with each night devoted to a different group of professional fields.

Woldt's presentation explained the duties of a Service Fishery Biologist and the role the Service plays in fisheries conservation to interested students, parents, and community members. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of implementing educational and outreach activities to educate public regarding Service activities under the "Public Use" and "Aquatic

Species Conservation and Management” priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Aaron Woldt

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management



Partners Program at the Alpena FRO Ranks 2005 Projects

Alpena FRO personnel ranked Partners for Fish and Wildlife (Partners) projects for the 2005 field season on February 15, 2005. Projects included a multitude of watershed and wetland restoration projects, several projects working with improving habitat for endangered species, and one project reducing the impact of an aquatic nuisance species. Watershed restoration projects span six watersheds and include road crossing restoration, large woody debris placement (in lake and riverine ecosystems), restoration of erosion sites, and treatment of Eurasian watermilfoil. Wetland restoration projects are located in seven counties in northern Michigan, and total an estimated 115 acres. The Alpena FRO was successful in funding an estimated \$150,000 worth of projects for the 2005 field season;

all projects with a minimum of a 1:1 match.

Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects contribute toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” component of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Heather Enterline